

## Scofflaws Beware! Patients Protected

Submitted by Jim Rathlesberger, M.P.A., Executive Officer, Board of Podiatric Medicine. BPM is the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) unit licensing podiatric physicians & surgeons under the State Medical Practice Act.

*May 26, 2006, Sacramento*--Government regulation is controversial. Especially in professions like podiatric medicine elevated to elite levels of respect through peer review and self-regulation. Who wants government involved any more than necessary?

Free-market advocates sometimes espouse *caveat emptor* and question the existence of state licensing itself. But most observers accept healthcare as one area where regulation is appropriate. It still needs to be thoughtful (i.e., not “mindless bureaucracy”).

BPM Board Members keep this in mind, especially in preparing the *Sunset Review Reports* to the Legislature. The current 2006-due date, fyi, may be postponed to 2008 pursuant to pending legislation, SB 1476.

*The New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy*, Third Edition. 2002.

### **Caveat emptor**

(KAV-ee-aht, KAH-vee-aht EMP-tawr) Latin for “Let the buyer beware.” It means that a customer should be cautious and alert to the possibility of being cheated: “Caveat emptor is the first rule of buying a used car.”

The Board asks whether the program is “Good enough for government work.” And it is not applying that as an excuse for mediocrity. The question is whether state consumer protection is good enough for Californians.

We continually work to improve:

- ❑ The Medical Board is working with the Medical Board Monitor.
- ❑ The Department of Consumer Affairs is enhancing use of new technology and customer service.
- ❑ BPM plays an important cutting-edge role in demonstrating that continuing competence, fuller disclosure of public information and privatization of drug/alcohol rehab programs are not threats to organized medicine.

DPMs rightly take pride in their higher professional standards. Scofflaws get caught early, to everyone’s benefit.

Licensing Coordinator **Patty Rodriguez** and Enforcement Coordinator **Michelle Mason** have unqualified support. Striving to be fair, without overreaching, the organizational culture is to use the system, go by the book, and obey the law as well as enforce it.

**More**

BPM's *Strategic Plan* and Public Outreach Committee chaired by USC Professor Elizabeth Graddy, PhD mandate ongoing improvements too. Administrative Coordinator **Kathleen Cook** is upgrading BPM's website in consultation with the Department of Consumer Affairs and Dr. Dan Altchuler of the CPMA Board of Directors.

*Check it out:* [bpm.ca.gov](http://bpm.ca.gov)

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